DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 148 UD 011 957

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TITLE Law and Order in Classroom and Corridor. NCRIEEO Tipsheet, Number 6.
INSTITUTION Columbia Univ., New York, N.Y. National Center for Research and Information on Equal Educational Opportunity.
PUB DATE Nov 71
NOTE 6p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Culture Conflict; *Disadvantaged Youth; Discipline Policy; *Discipline Problems; Integration Effects; Police Action; Police School Relationship; *School Administration; School Attitudes; School Integration; Security; Student Alienation; Student Behavior; *Student School Relationship; *Student Teacher Relationship

ABSTRACT

With the increase in the number of newly desegrated and not yet integrated schools has come a rise in reports of student behaviors considered anti-school and anti-teacher. Many institutions are strengthening security personnel to enforce order and discipline. But community reaction to "police" may be more destructive than the unacceptable behavior of children, Student participation in administration does not necessarily reduce or eliminate the occurrence of such behaviors, which are not in themselves a new phenomenon. Hiring uniformed guards is more of a new act which everyone confronted with serious discipline problems does not do. A more positive and constructive approach is the continual evaluation of discipline standards in all schools, integrated or segregated. Teachers must take into account the many factors which comprise natural barriers not only to the learning process but to human interaction as well. The disadvantaged have a "second education" quite different from that institutionalized by Jews, Chinese, and Japanese: it is a "reality education" with one's social and even physical survival at stake. This informal education is uniquely divergent from the formal education attempted in schools. Employment of the symbols of law enforcement to coerce surface conformity to the standards of schools is demeaning to both guards and students, and ultimately self-defeating. (JM)

LAW and ORDER in CLASSROOM and CORRIDOR

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NCRIEEO TIPSHEET #6

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NOVEMBER 1971

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UD011957

Problem:

In newly desegregated and not yet integrated schools, school personnel find it difficult to cope with a heterogeneous student body which does not conform to traditional controls. Discipline problems are mentioned more and more often. Individual students and groups of students do not satisfy the orderly behavior expectations of either teacher, administrator, or those parents of "good" children now in regular contact with minority-group children for the first time. Reaction patterns considered anti-social, and specifically anti-school and anti-teacher are reported on the rise. Whereas some of the disturbing behavior clearly springs from faulty personality development, and pathologies related to negative environmental factors experienced by "disadvantaged" and minority population life styles, some of it is technically criminal and clearly dangerous. Many institutions are responding by strengthening security personnel to enforce order and discipline. Unhappily, community reaction to "police" in the school corridors may be more destructive to the educational process than the unacceptable behavior of children.

In a school setting there is an obvious need for order which facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills from educator to pupil. As in many glittering generalities, however, lack of clarity and agreement on just what is the requirement for the survival and processes of the institution and what best serves the expressed commitment and objectives of educators may pose a problem. Flood looks beyond the corridor concerns for discipline and says:

> Educators know that learning atmosphere can be greatly enhanced by order in the school. To assure that order will prevail, there must be an effective system or means to control behavior. Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary defines discipline as being, 'training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral faculties.' This infers that mere control of pupils is not discipline in the finest state, but that discipline must aim toward the perfection of lasting values and permanent qualities which will be the frame of reference for all future behavior.

Gertrude Noar suggests that all students should be treated alike, under a well-thought-out set of disciplinary policies and procedures. She deplores

favoritism or undue variance in the insistence upon behavior standards based on the identity of the students involved. To the inexperienced teacher and to the one in the newly desegregated situation, she advises:

> If you have had no previous experience and hear other teachers talking about discipline, and if you tend to think about Negroes, Mexican-Americans, and Puerto Ricans in terms of the common negative stereotypes, you may be worried about how you will control them. First of all, then you must rid yourself of the expectation that Negro (or other minority group) children are going to be naughty, defiant, disobedient, and impudent. Usually, in the first months in mixed classrooms, they are quiet, try hard to follow directions, and are as polite and courteous as the best children in the room. Of course, they watch their white classmates, and in rooms where white children run around, talk back, drop books, and do other disturbing things without being corrected by the teacher, they are likely to follow suit. Then, presently, the teacher may say that she has a 'Negro discipline problem,' or that 'the new element is troublesome.' Some teachers who seem not to hear noise created by white children quickly blame the Negroes or other minority-group pupils for all that goes wrong in the classroom.

Many contemporary "disadvantaged" children, while feeling limited in upward economic and social mobility and limited in world-view, sense a greater freedom to express, and often act out, a generalized personal and collective rage at traditional and adult institutions. Considering the noise, pollution, social problems they inherit, and a generally deteriorating environment our young may well have cause for disenchantment and generalized anger. The fact that must be dealt with is that if anger, hostility, frustration, or disenchantment, is accompanied by invective or physical attack upon school personnel, fellow students, or property, the optimum atmosphere for teaching or learning rapidly deteriorates. Educators cannot afford to stand by and let the quality of the learning setting collapse completely into bedlam and terror. News media faithfully report the seeming anarchy and confusion which results. That there are deep-seated social and political pathologies at the base of the individual misbehavior, and that the responsibility for such miscreance is diffused nationally, is no solace to an assaulted teacher or student. Nor is the fact that the perpetrator is also a victim of an environmentally imposed involuntary life style very helpful. Even the most implacable critics of schools, and education in general, agree that teaching and learning is difficult in the midst of disorder, absence of mutual respect and purpose, and danger that causes the school to develop extraordinary resources devoted to monitoring rather than to teaching.

Does Student Participation Help?

Increasing participation by students in the administration of schools is a growing phenomenon providing only partial answers. Too often steps in this direction are taken because of pressures brought to bear by students, their parents, or other community forces. Many adults decline to admit that pupil behavior is a vital ingredient in the process. Community control of school drives sometimes precedes, but often merely follows student concerns and disruptions. But community control and a reorganized (re-manipulated) student senate does not necessarily lead to restoration or maintenance of order and discipline. Even when such inclusion of students in institutional decisions is more than ceremonial, individual students and groups within the student body may continue to attack staff members verbally or physically, vandalize, pilfer and be disruptive and recalcitrant.

Is This a New Phenomenon?

It must be acknowledged openly that small numbers of intractables are traditional problems for teachers. Teacher education programs are supposed to prepare the instructor for

coping with them. Teachers in multicultured communities, ghettoes, poor neighborhoods, and integrated school settings, have had occasion to deal with a child using foul language, the sneak thief, the vandal, the non-conformist. They do so regularly. So have teachers in previously segregated schools. Desegregation does bring this experience in more potent dosage to educators previously sheltered in homogeneous and superficially stable communities. When both teacher and miscreant sprang from the same socio-economic, racial, and general ethnic background, one rarely heard of disorder in the classroom and corridor interpreted as a major problem in education. Somehow it was taken care of. Schools were rarely ringed with armed policemen. Currently, discipline, control, security, and conformity within the school takes on a racial and cultural implication.

Many children are hyperactive, uncooperative, and anti-social in the classroom because they are hungry, sensitive to deep-seated and poorly camouflaged rejection. Some are turned to misdirection by poor teaching, over-crowding, or stress in their home conditions. There is an unavoidable obligation on adults to improve circumstances which harm the child. Stressing the artifacts of discipline is, in part, avoidance of our obligations.

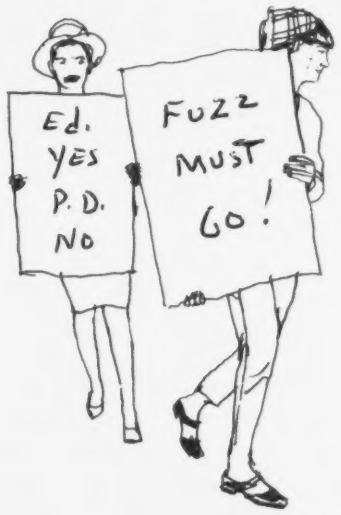
Actually there is no clear evidence that the newly desegregated "disadvantaged" are contributing disproportionately to school disruption and crime. It may be that their behavior is the most memorable and noted, and the uniform and instinctive group reaction to the threatening "new people" in the situation.

In the light of such descriptions of the "disadvantaged" and "deprived" as Reissman gives, interpersonal and institution vs. individual contention may well be anticipated when educators insist upon traditional "acceptable" behavior via the American middle-class oriented school staff. Such striking images become more illuminating, of <u>something</u>, with repetitive reading.

Reissman describes some of the more outstanding characteristics of the culture of the deprived individual:

> He is traditional, 'old fashioned' in many ways, patriarchal, superstitious, somewhat religious, ...reads ineffectively, is poorly informed...has definite, intense convictions...feels alienated...is not individualistic, introspective, self-oriented, or concerned with self-expression...holds the world, rather than himself, responsible for his misfortunes...prefers jobs that promise security to those than entail risk...is not class conscious...is not interested in politics...is strongly anti-communist...sets great store by his family and his personal comforts...likes excitement...is pragmatic and anti-intellectual.

It is important to know these broad general characteristics in order to deal with these people.



Questioning heretofore unchallenged school staff behavior and the random striking out against it may be a good thing in the long run. In fact, if we attend such pioneers in American democracy as Jefferson, Franklin, <u>et.al.</u>, one should not submit blindly to authoritarianism--a standard school staff posture. Verbal assault may often be one skirmish in the war to hold off cultural obliteration and personal non-entitism. Walking in the halls without the South African type identity and destination pass may be implicit demands for more participation in at least small decisions concerning one's self. After all, there is some evidence that some adults find such requirements outrageous, after mature thought. Uniformed security personnel and roving patrols on the campus are somewhat akin to street intersection check points and assault battalions quartered handily.

Is Everyone Hiring Uniformed Guards?

Superintendents and principals considering calling the police should reflect. All schools are not beset by an upsurge in classroom battery. In school, friction of values and behavior norms has not terrorized all the teachers. All schools are not saturated with drugs and pushers and hallway hooligans. Perhaps they are solving the problem. Surely the fact that most of the youngsters grow up to be fine citizens indicates that some schools maintain some communication between generations and subcultures and succeed in inculcating some respect for traditional "American" values.

Stinchcombe reached a provocative parallel conclusion in his study of adolescent rebellion in a high school:

> The major practical conclusion is that rebellious behavior is largely a reaction to the school itself and to its promises, not a failure of the family or community. High school students can be motivated to conform by paying them in the realistic coin of future adult advantages. Except perhaps for pathological cases, any students can be motivated to conform if the school can realistically promise something valuable to them as a reward for working hard. But for a large part of the population, especially the adolescents who will enter the male working class or the female candidates for early marriage, the school has nothing to promise.

Some schools work toward developing and maintaining the optimum environment for teaching and learning. For the notable example of positive thinking in this direction see Discipline Standards in Integrated Schools, a teacher resource manual used in an inservice training program which focused on assisting personnel of School District 65, Evanston, Illinois, to develop common understandings about crucial integration issues. This program outlines one no-use-of-uniform-or-club approach to discipline, centered around a "Main Idea" and working in a group training situation with seven "Sub-ideas" presented as follows:

DISCIPLINE STANDARDS IN INTEGRATED SCHOOLS

MAIN IDEA: Discipline standards should constantly be evaluated and re-evaluated in all schools, integrated as well as segregated schools.

Sub-ideas:

I. Negative behavior may result from the circumstances of the environment and the pressures on the individual rather than the fact that a youngster is black, white, or yellow.

II. The basic principles involved in discipline are the same for all races, considering the fact that each child is an individual and must be dealt with as such.

III. The teacher can help eliminate negative behavior by demonstrating to the child that natural consequences will follow disruptive acts. The teacher can be the link between what the child does and the results of his act.

IV. Discipline standards should promote and enhance each student's self-respect.

V. Discussion of discipline problems with such consultants as other teachers, the principal, social worker, counselor, parents, etc, may result in a better understanding and possible solution of the problem.

VI. Regular class discussion of discipline problems, rules of behavior, and solutions should help children understand their own behavior.

VII. A teacher's conscious and unconscious attitudes toward children, especially in an integrated school, affect their behavior.

Reactions to uniformed forces in schools are likely to grow. Reflective of this probability is a quote from a position paper of the National Urban League Education Advisory Committee:

> A survey in the fall of 1969 revealed that of the fifty-one major cities which responded to

a questionnaire, only four did not employ their own security officers or use city policemen in daily school operations. Systems that started with security patrols for junior high schools/middle schools soon found it necessary to expand this service to senior high schools and finally elementary schools. A few incidents can and have panicked systems to the point where almost every school in urban communities is staffed with some form of security/discipline personnel or armed policemen.

It is our contention that it is impossible for a favorable climate for learning to be established within this type of environment. Further, we believe that this visible manifestation of the problem of security in our schools only represents the surface of a much greater problem. Obviously, more security personnel and trained policemen will not make the schools a better place for children!

Flood tries to further illuminate the heart of the matter by pointing out:

Teachers should be aware of the existence in our social structure of certain factors which comprise natural barriers to not only the learning process but to human interaction as well. We are socially grouped into many different divisions according to such factors as geographical residence, political philosophy, economic possessions, age, and race. In making the designation of these divisions, there is the accompanying factor that status is concomitantly assigned to the divisions. For example, north is higher than south, urban is higher than rural, rich is higher than poor, white is higher than black, and old is higher than young in terms of status. The fact that such divisions and status positions exist make it likely that most natural positions for members of opposite groups to take would be adversary positions.

The barrier of age has been often referred to as the 'generation gap.' To many, this term signals a sense of futility in any effort which might be made to span or lessen the gap. The solution to bridging the gap may be found in understanding some of the causes of its existence.

The barrier of age is the most restrictive barrier in the minds of youth. They view the status position of adults with envy and resentment. The natural reaction then becomes to 'put down' the adult image; that is, to level the image so negatively as to assure ample defense against its glamor. The paradox here is that while rejecting the adult image overtly, the same youth may be striving incessantly to imitate that image.

The self-concept is the picture one develops of himself and is frequently consistent with the status assignment imposed by the barriers mentioned earlier. His image of others is also consistent with their assigned status. Thus the basis for the relationship between persons emerges from the perspective in which they view themselves in relation to others in keeping with status positions. For example, the student is black, low-class, rural and young. There are present in this relationship four natural barriers which must be realized and overcome before learning can receive priority. The more opposite characteristics one adds to this list, the more deterrents to the learning process are in evidence. Compatibility can ensue only if the teacher becomes aware of the presence of these barriers and works actively toward the elimination of them.

To additionally confound the educator in the no longer sheltered school, superimposed upon some pupils in the desegregated classes is yet another education. It is the reality education of the poor, the "disadvantaged" have-nots, and the environmentally wounded. It is the informal education for survival and identity required by economically and socially marginal human existence. It is a basic training in holding onto one's self and coping with environmental factors upon which the children and the subcultures from which they crawl see themselves as exerting little control. Of necessity, children from such a setting develop sets of behavior which may collide with the behavioral objectives of the institution-oriented orderly school staff. Teachers are conditioned most to deal with the educational problems of the positively orientated, with children conscious of potential upward social and economic mobility. The nature of the traditional classroom and school frequently reduces these divergences to a one-to-one confrontation and conflict within the class and corridors. For the school to respond with a show of muscle is hardly an answer.

Further, some informal second education systems contribute to order in our public schools as a

fringe benefit for public institutions. Most notably this is the process by which some Jewish, Chinese, Japanese, and others, conduct schooling for the young separately and in addition to public school education. This is in effect a double education being administered to each child.

Such institutions may teach "native" language and cultural values important to the ethnic group of the young member. Most of these values support those important to public school educators. Many such second education programs reinforce identity and clarify it, a consideration of prime importance to healthy personality development, and have a tempering effect upon the student the public school teacher has to deal with. The Black-orientated school is a growing new phenomenon, but such practices are common in the country. If one accepts the notion that the "melting pot" concept is a palliative and misdirected cop-out, that this should be, and can be an honestly culturally pluralistic society, this double education is a definite positive in its general effects upon the young and to the nation as a whole. If, on the other hand, one longs to have all Americans alike--tied exclusively and specifically to the same language and inflexibly committed to achieving the same life style, and conformity behavior, then frustration and waste of national human resource is inevitable.

Security forces secure, protect, monitor, control, intimidate, and repress. Remediation or counter development of positive substitute behavior is not the primary function of police, in hallways or elsewhere. Police forces, by any name, have a primary responsibility of which they are justifiably unashamed: apprehension of criminals and the prevention of crime. Forcing conformity upon children in the midst of an educational process is a far cry from this. Employment of uniform, club, badge, gun, and the other paraphernalia of law enforcement to make teenagers walk straight and quietly down a school hallway is demeaning to the officer, insulting to the children and their families, and of questionable overall merit or effectiveness. Finally, uniformed guards in great number in a school are a clear indication that the institution is proceeding in fear and failure.

Wendell J. Roye

Suggested Readings

Discipline Standard in Integrated Schools, Resource Manual, Community Consolidated School District 65, Evanston, Illinois.

Is Discipline Dead? National School Public Relations Association. Pamphlet.

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